

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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SUNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 4406

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: INFORMATION POLICY AND PRESS LEADK

REFS: (A) USNATO 4390 (NOTAL) (B) STATE 185002 (C) STATE 184990

SUMMARY: AT THE SEPTEMBER 19 NAC U.S. WAS SHARPLY CRITIZED BY ITS ALLIES FOR RECENT PRESS LEAKS IN SEVERAL AMERICAN NEWS-PAPERS ABOUT ALLIANCE MBFR NEGOTIATING POSITIONS. FULL FURY OF CRITICISM WAS PARTIALLY SPENT AT SEPTEMBER 18 PERMREPS LUNCH (REF A) AND PARTIALLY DEFLECTED BY DISSEMINATION ON SEPTEMBER 18 OF U.S. PAPER ON MBFR PRESS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICY (DRAWN FROM GUIDANCE IN REF B). A FEW PERMREPS AND THE CHAIRMAN, SYG LUNS, MADE HALFHEARTED ATTEMPTS TO SOFTEN CRITICISM WITH WIT AND IRONY, BUT FUNDAMENTAL DISMAY OF ALLIES SHOWED THROUGH AND WORDS LIKE "DEPLORABLE," "DISASTEROUS" WERE USED IN ALL SERIOUSNESS TO QUALIFY TOTH, MIDDELTON, AND GEOTLER PRESS STORIES WHICH LUNS AT ONE POINT REFERRED TO AS "U.S. GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASES."  
END SUMMARY.

1. AS NOTED IN REF A, DISCUSSION OF MBFR PRESS POLICY (I.E. MBFR PRESS LEAKS IN U.S.) WAS LAST MINUTE ADDITION TO SEPTEMBER 19 NAC  
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AGENDA. LUNS INTRODUCED SUBJECT WITH A TONE OF MISCHIEVOUS UNDER-STATEMENT. COUNCIL DEAN DE STAERCKE (BELGIUM) TOOK UP THE LIGHTHEARTED TONE NOTING THE IRONY OF THE U.S. TABLING A DRAFT ON ALLIANCE MBFR PRESS POLICY WHICH INCLUDED STATEMENTS ABOUT THE

INADVISIBILITY OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF MBFR POSITIONS AND TACTICS STILL BEING WORKED OUT AMONG THE ALLIES AT THE VERY TIME THE LA TIMES, WASHINGTON POST, AND NEW YORK TIMES STORIES ON MBFR HIT THE STREETS. DE STAERCKE COMMENTED THAT ALL ALLIES ARE SUBJECT TO PRESSURE

FROM THEIR NATIONAL PRESS ESTABLISHMENTS BUT OTHERS (THAN U.S.) HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RESIST SO FAR. THIS DEMONSTRATED NEED FOR PROMPT ALLIANCE AGREEMENT ON MBFR PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICY. CANADIAN PERMREP (MENZIES) TOOK UP SAME THEME. IN RAPID EXCHANGE AMONG LUNS, DE STAERCKE, AND MENZIES U.S. PRESS STORIES WERE TERMED "DISASTROUS."

2. UK PERMREP (PECK) CALLED LEAKS "DEPLORABLE" AND REPEATED HIS PERMREP LUNCH ANALYSIS OF WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM, I.E. EITHER RELEASE BARRAGE OF CONFLICTING STORIES TO CONFUSE SOVIETS OR SAY NOTHING WHATSOEVER, MAINTAINING SILENCE UNTIL WELL INTO ACTUAL MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AND THUS KEEP SOVIETS GUESSING. HE PREFERRED THE LATTER. DUTCH AND GERMAN REPS ALSO REGRETTED PRESS LEAKS BUT WELCOMED U.S. PRESENTATION OF PRESS POLICY PAPER.

3. RUMSFELD (US) SAID HE HAD TO ADMIT THAT AS THINGS WORKED OUT THE TIMING OF THE ARRIVAL OF OUR PAPER ON ALLIANCE MBFR PRESS POLICY WAS "IMPERFECT" BUT ALLIES WOULD OF COURSE UNDERSTAND PAPER WAS BEING DEVELOPED WELL BEFORE MBFR STORIES APPEARED IN US PRESS. RUMSFELD SAID THESE STORIES WHICH REVEALED "ELEMENTS OF VARIOUS MBFR PROPOSALS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE ALLIANCE ARE REGRETTABLE

THEY ARE DAMAGING NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY INDICATE POTENTIAL FEATURES OF THE ALLIANCE POSITION, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY CONTAIN ERRONEOUS INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT MISLEAD AND CONFUSE PUBLIC OPINION. PERHAPS EVEN MORE SERIOUSLY, THESE STORIES ARE UNFORTUNATE BECAUSE THEY DO NOT EXPLAIN THE REASONING AND PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE ALLIES' APPROACH.

4. RUMSFELD SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW, ALL THIS UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMELY ALLIANCE CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC AFFAIR POLICY. HE NOTED THAT HIS REPRESENTATIVE AT THE SENIOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE

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YESTERDAY CIRCULATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S MORE DETAILED VIEWS ON SUCH A POLICY. WHAT THE U.S. PROPOSES, RUMSFELD SAID, IS THAT THE ALLIES DEVELOP A CHECKLIST OF GENERAL MBFR THEMES WHICH WOULD ASSIST OUR GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN IN THEIR NATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS DIRECTED TOWARDS PUBLIC, PARLIAMENTS AND THE PRESS ON MBFR. RUMSFELD.

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